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Hunter et al.

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(54) **IDENTIFYING CONSUMERS ONLINE FOR PROVIDING OFFERS AND COUPON VALIDATION ONLINE, IN REAL-TIME, AND AT THE POINT OF SALE**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
None
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 153 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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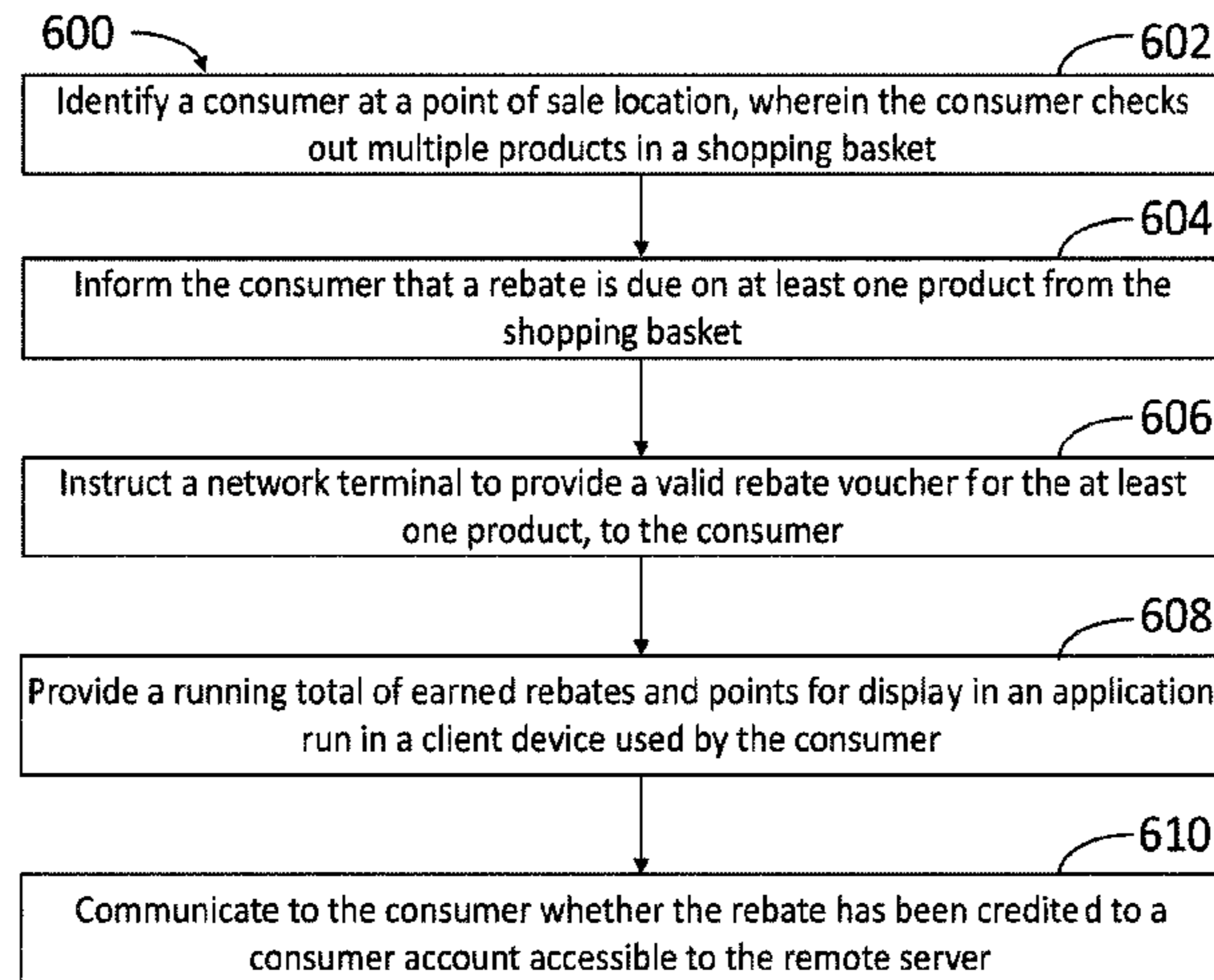
(63) Continuation of application No. 16/237,007, filed on Dec. 31, 2018, now Pat. No. 11,216,837.
(Continued)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method, including receiving, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a client device, is provided. The method includes matching the client device identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, identifying a shopping history for consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and requesting, through the application, an information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The method further includes verifying the identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and providing an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store. A system and a non-transitory, computer readable medium
(Continued)

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G06Q 30/0226 (2023.01)
G06F 21/31 (2013.01)
(Continued)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **G06Q 30/0229** (2013.01); **G06F 21/31** (2013.01); **G06Q 20/20** (2013.01);
(Continued)



storing instructions to perform the above method are also provided.

20 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets

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CPC **G06Q 30/0207** (2013.01); **G06Q 30/0222** (2013.01); **G06Q 30/0224** (2013.01); **G06Q 30/0277** (2013.01)

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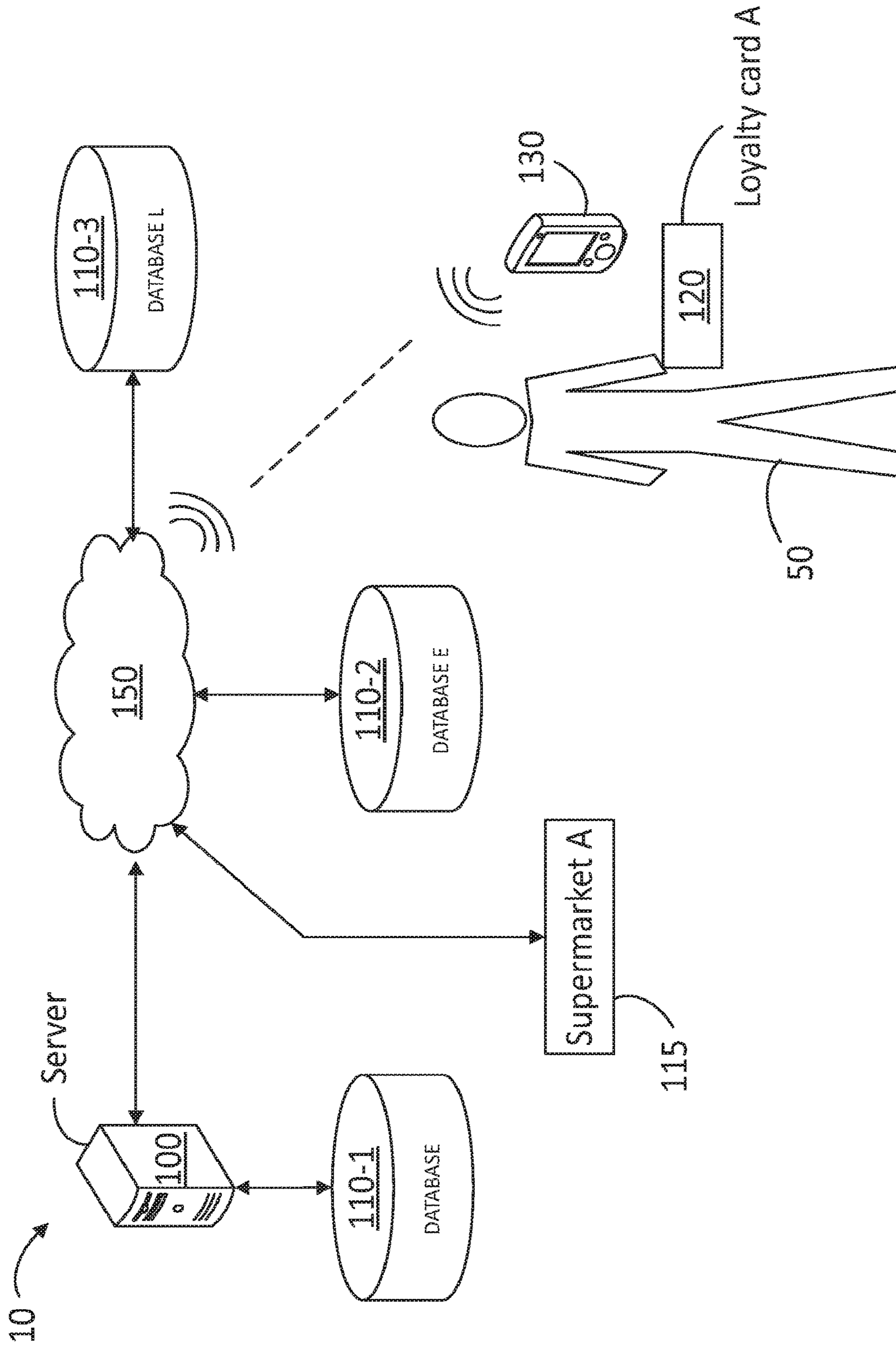


FIG. 1

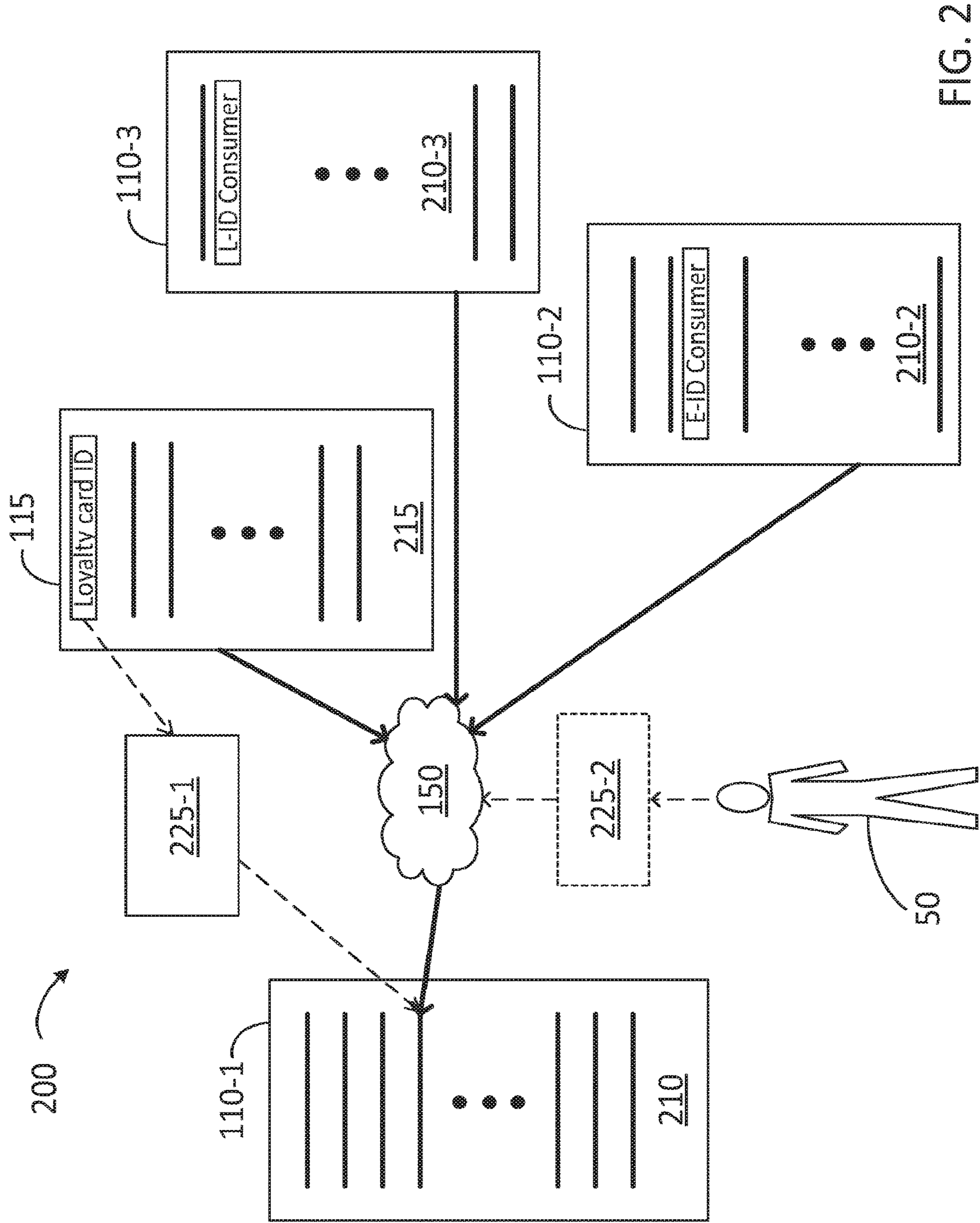


FIG. 2

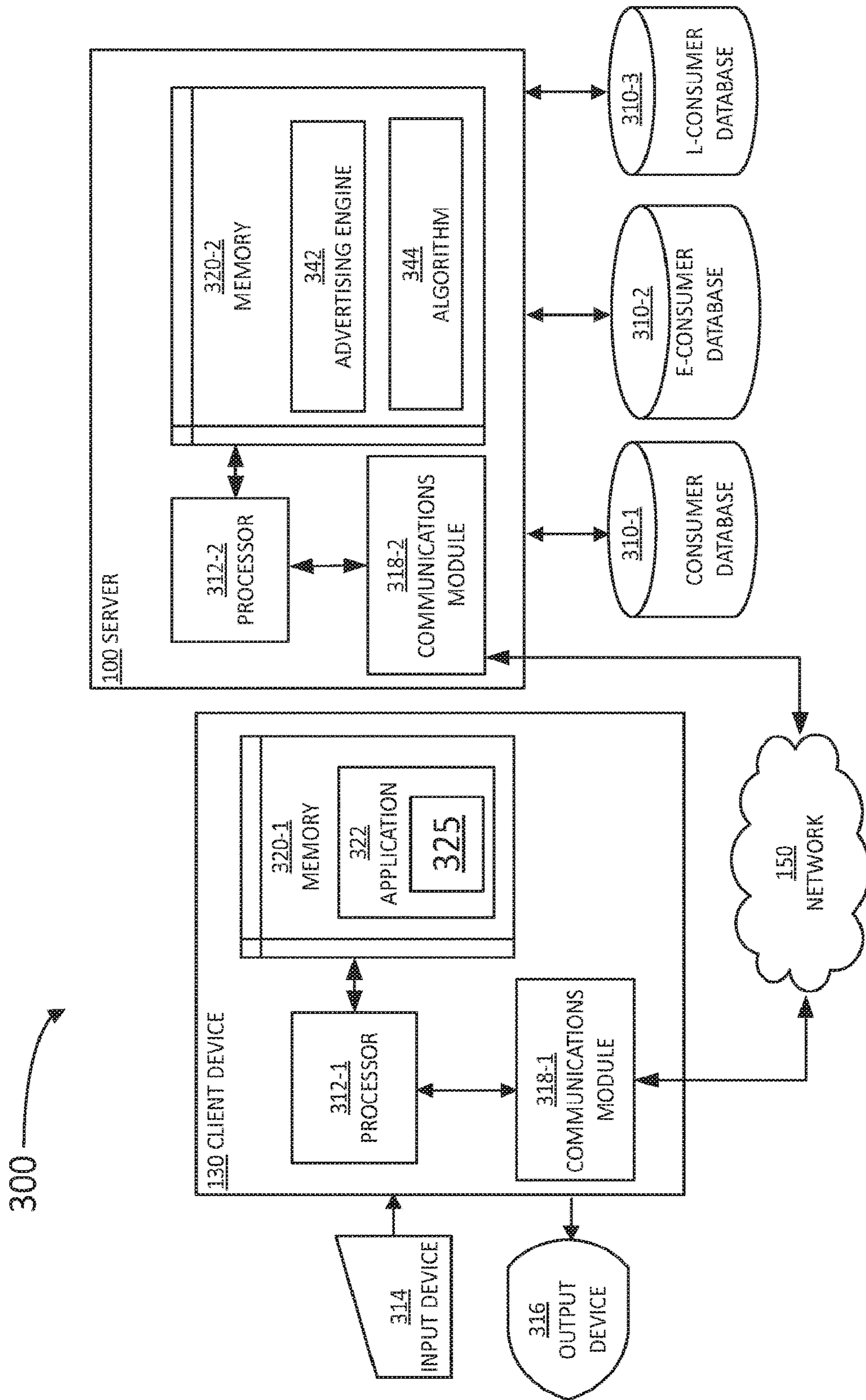


FIG. 3

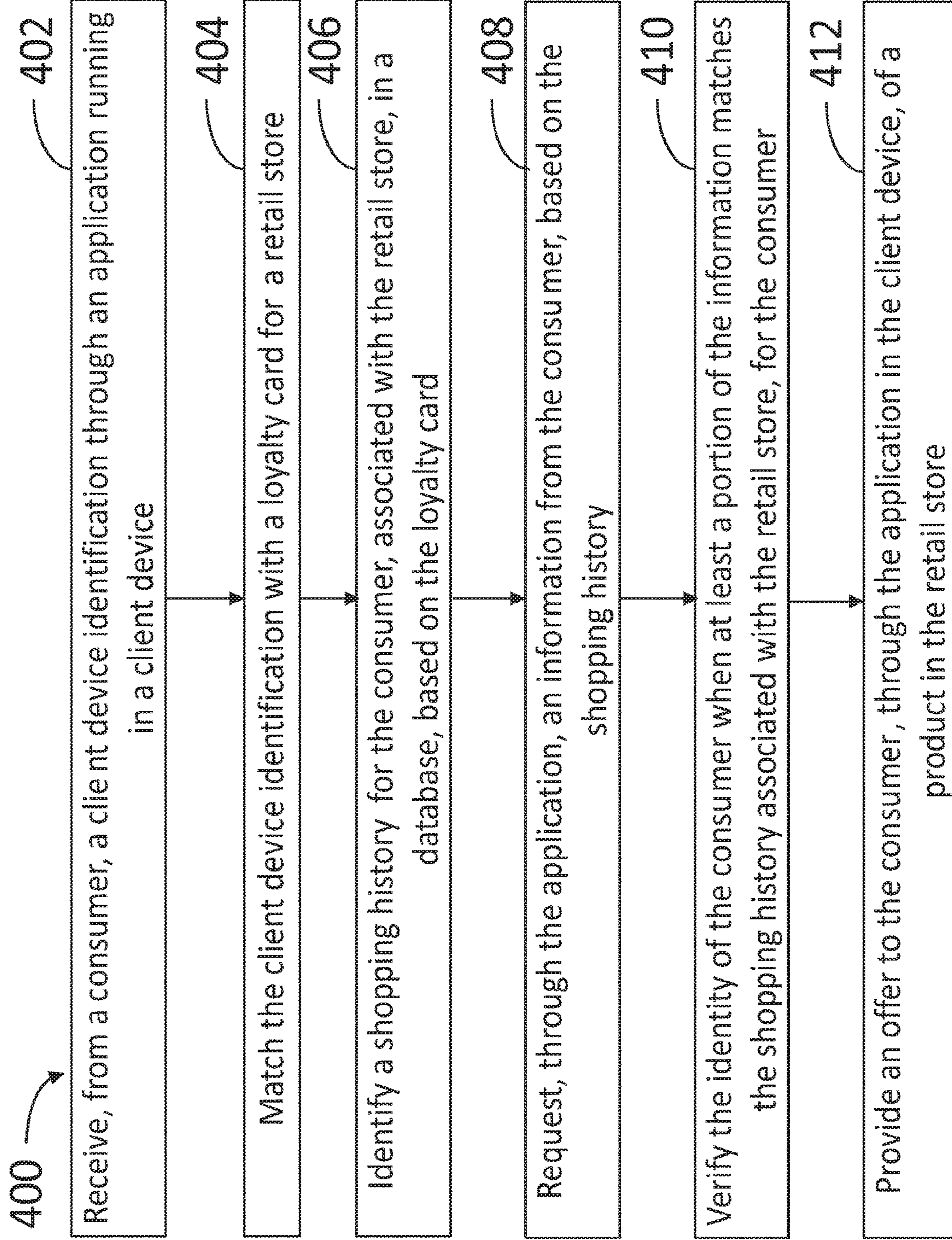


FIG. 4

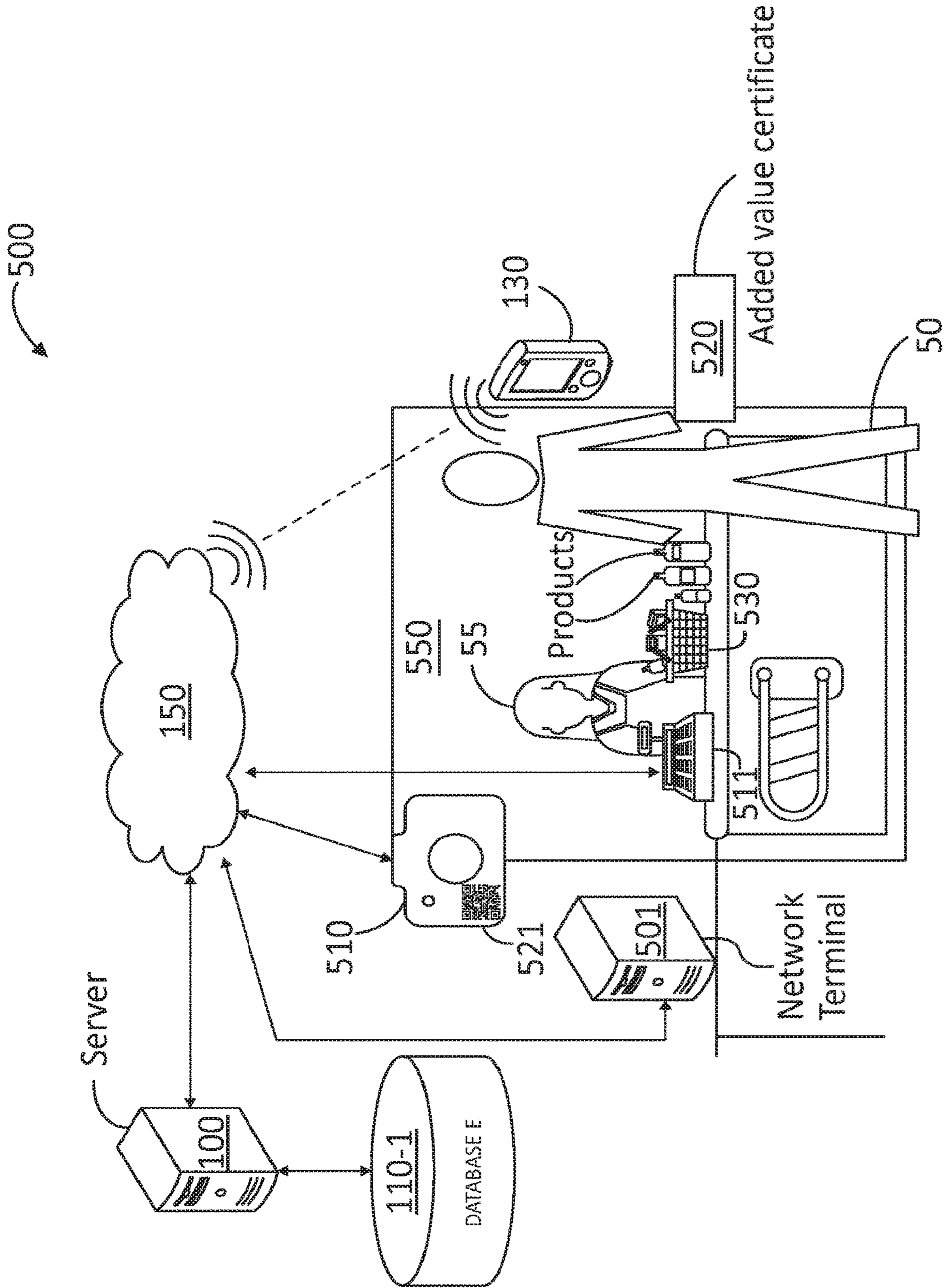


FIG. 5

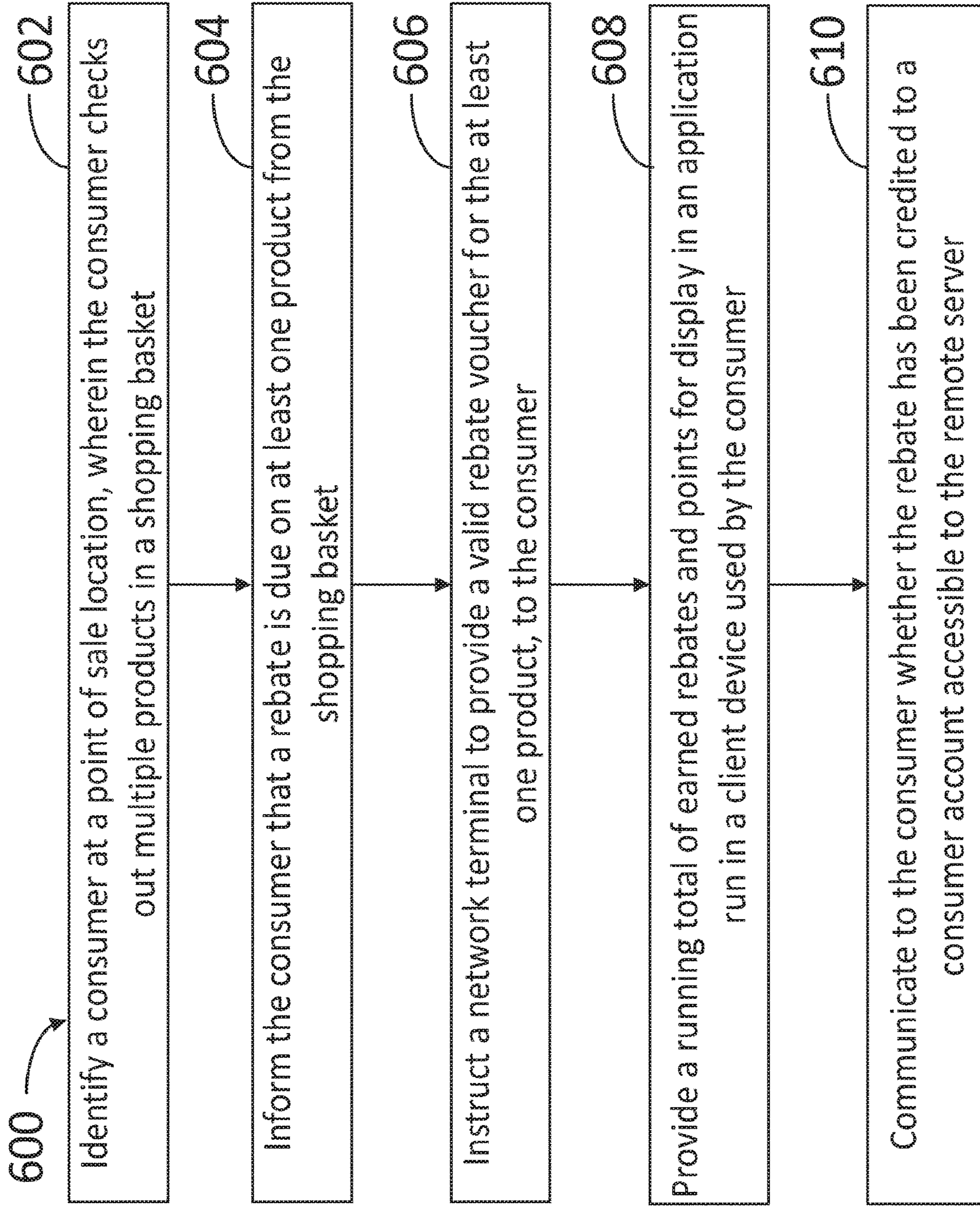


FIG. 6

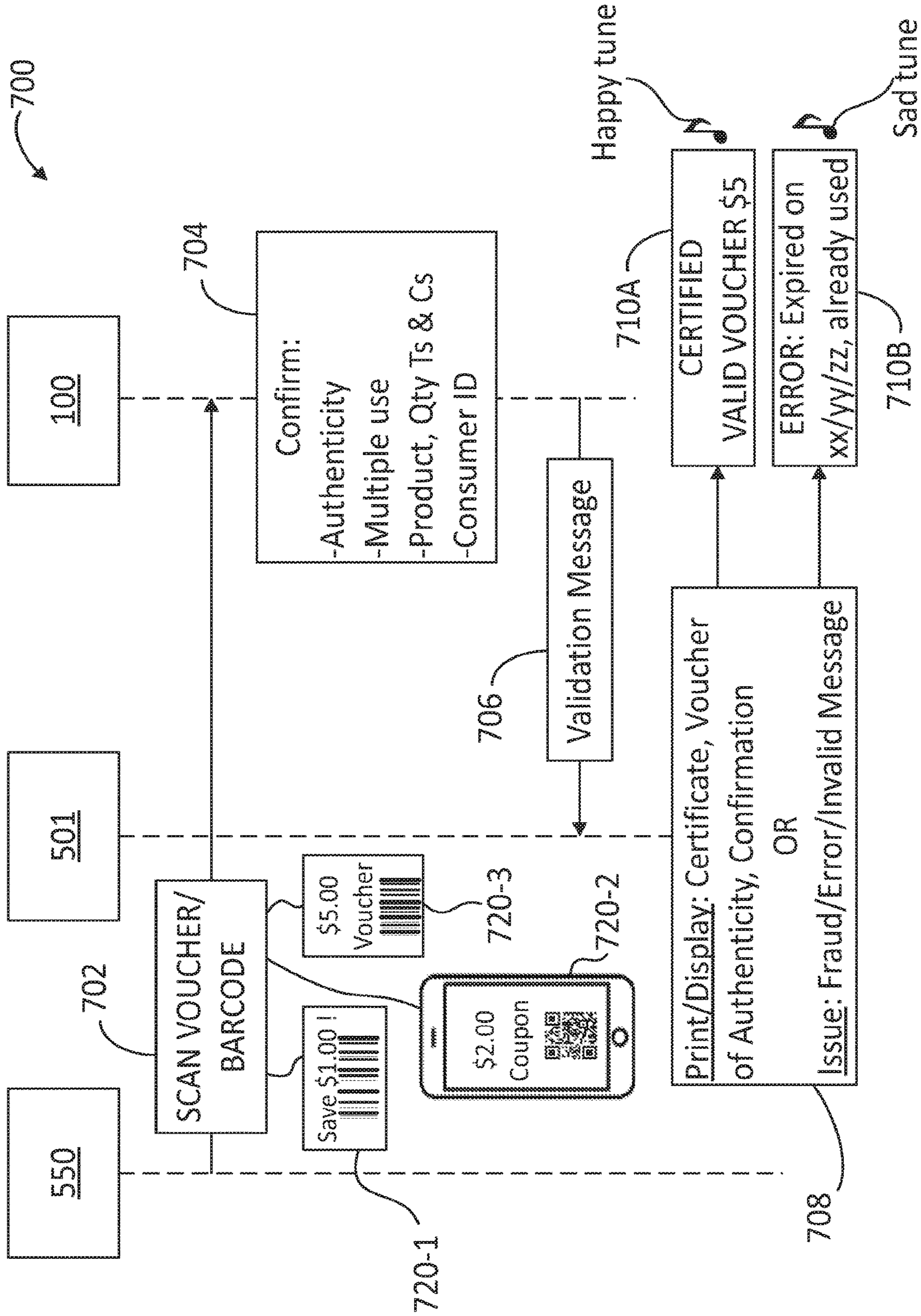


FIG. 7

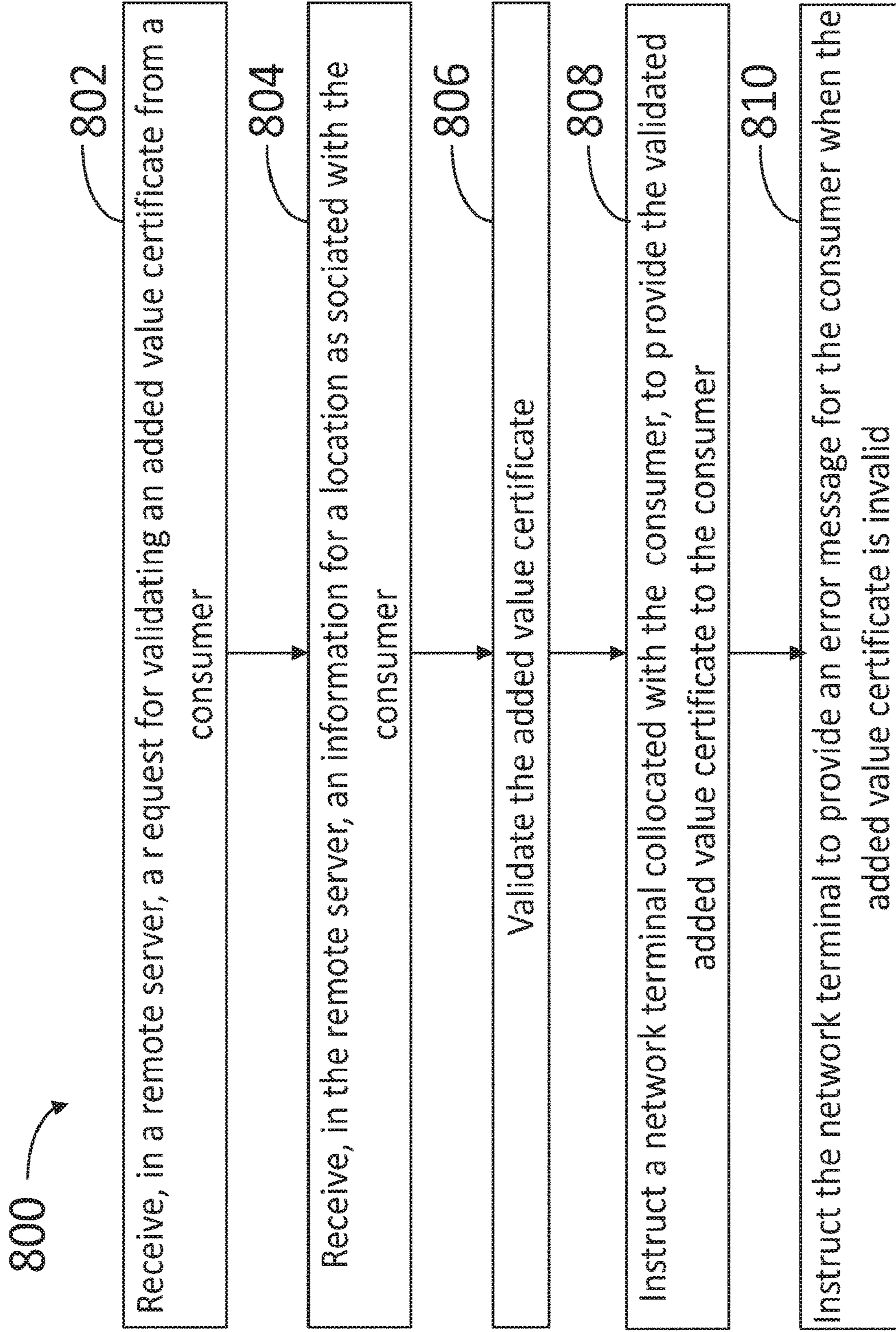


FIG. 8

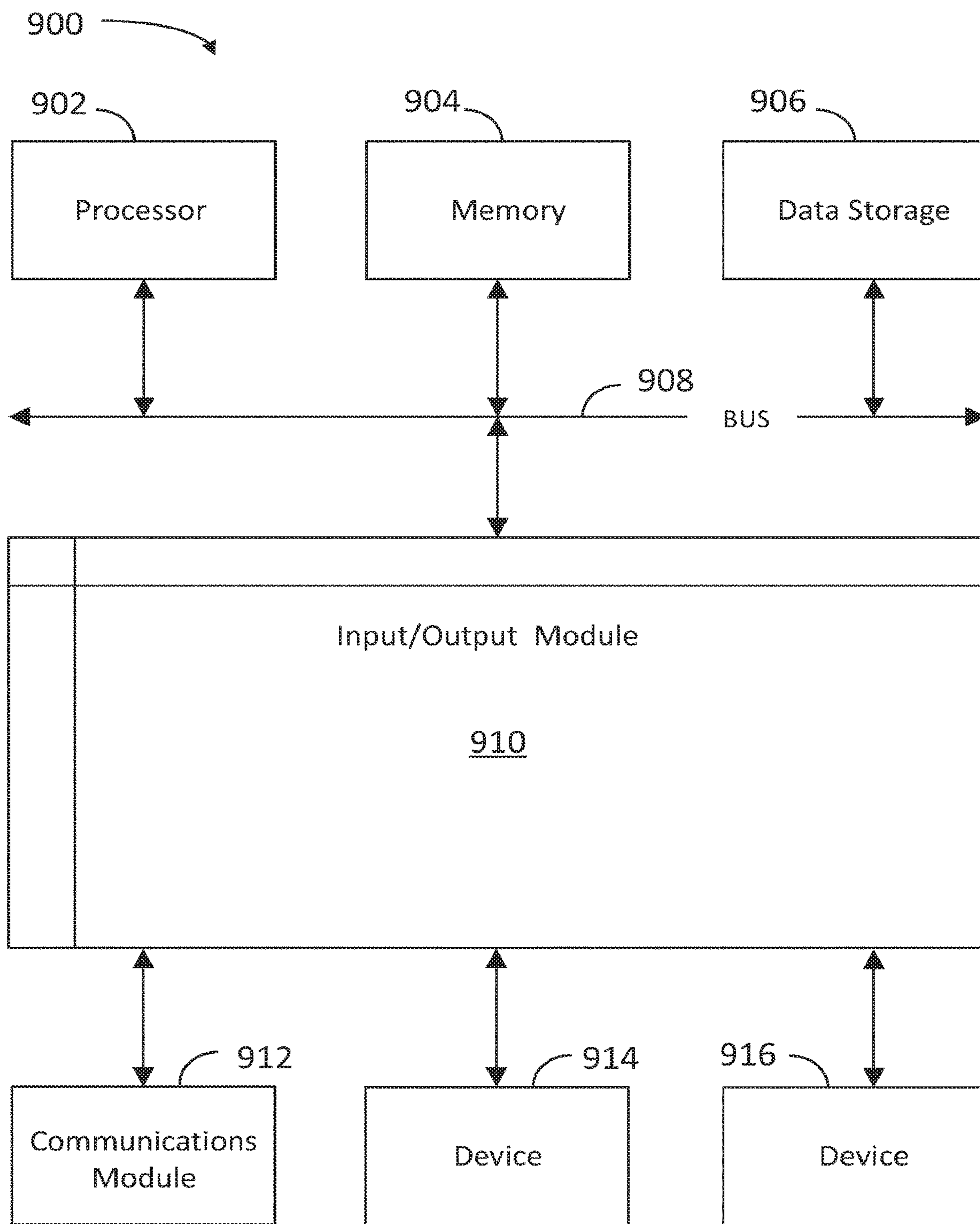


FIG. 9

1

**IDENTIFYING CONSUMERS ONLINE FOR
PROVIDING OFFERS AND COUPON
VALIDATION ONLINE, IN REAL-TIME, AND
AT THE POINT OF SALE**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED
APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 120 as a continuation of, U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/237,007, entitled “IDENTIFYING CONSUMERS ONLINE FOR PROVIDING OFFERS AND COUPON VALIDATION ONLINE, IN REAL-TIME, AND AT THE POINT OF SALE,” to Kevin Hunter et al., filed on Dec. 31, 2018, which claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e), to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/612,934, entitled “IDENTIFYING SHOPPERS ON LINE,” to Joshua Herzig-Marx, Kevin Hunter, and Benjamin S. Sprecher, filed on Jan. 2, 2018, to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/613,347, entitled “REAL-TIME, REMOTE VALIDATION OF ADDED VALUE CERTIFICATES,” to Joshua Herzig-Marx and Benjamin S. Sprecher, filed on Jan. 3, 2018, and to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/613,344, entitled “REAL-TIME, POINT OF SALE CONSUMER REBATES,” to Mark Bees and Benjamin S. Sprecher, filed on Jan. 3, 2018, the contents of all of the above applications are herein incorporated by reference in their entirety, for all purposes.

BACKGROUND

Field

The present disclosure generally relates to identifying a consumer through a remote server for providing an offer from a retailer to consumer. More specifically, the present disclosure relates to methods and devices for providing a personalized offer to a consumer after identifying consumer based on information provided by consumer, the information including a purchasing history of consumer. The present disclosure also relates to consumer interactions at a point of sale (POS), more specifically to methods and devices for verifying and applying a consumer rebate for a consumer at a POS.

Description of the Related Art

Consumer identification protocols typically involve a request for a consumer to provide a password, ID value, or any other authentication credential that is hard to access or unavailable for consumer in some circumstances. The more difficult it is for a consumer to access a certain account or service, the less likely it is for consumer to return to the website for the service, or to respond to a request or offer for service.

In addition, current consumer rebate strategies involve post-transaction verification with a physical receipt, or another proof of purchase available to consumer. Users fill in a receipt including proof of purchase to receive, later on, the rebate. In some embodiments, these time-consuming post-transaction verification steps are avoided through direct communication between the rebate grantor and the POS, or accessing a loyalty system binding a consumer to a brand or a retail store. The POS authenticates an actual transaction tying consumer with a rebate product, and the rebate grantor approves and processes the rebate thereafter, separately from the POS. However, these configurations still require a two-

2

way communication between the POS and a server in communication with the rebate grantor, or accessing, by the server in communication with the rebate grantor, a loyalty account for consumer, where the details of every transaction may be stored. This process is time consuming, as it is generally asynchronous with respect to the presence of consumer at the POS at the time of purchase. However, consumers find it more convenient to receive rebates as close in time to the purchasing event as possible.

Current applications enable vendors to provide tickets and other certificates to the smart phones of users and consumers that third party vendors can verify on location. These certificates are validated using two-way systems requiring communication between a third party device and a remote server, for authorization. In such configurations, an application installed in the smart phone and hosted by the remote server is the validation engine, and the third party device is the origin and destination of the validation process (e.g., the “gate keeper”). While some of these applications provide an effective protection against counterfeits, they typically take a longer time, and involve the modification not only of the remote server, but also of the third party devices.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide further understanding and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate disclosed embodiments and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the disclosed embodiments. In the drawings:

FIG. 1 illustrates an example architecture suitable for identifying consumers online, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 2 illustrates an information exchange for identifying consumers online, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram illustrating an example server and a client from the architecture of FIG. 1, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating steps in a method for identifying a consumer online, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 5 illustrates a system configured to provide a real-time, POS consumer rebate, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 6 is a flow chart illustrating steps in a method for identifying and applying real-time, point of sale consumer rebates at a POS through a remote server, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 7 illustrates steps in a method for real-time, remote validation of added value certificates, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 8 is a flow chart illustrating steps in a method for providing real-time, point of sale validation of added value certificates, according to some embodiments.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram illustrating an example computer system with which the client and network device of FIG. 1 and the methods of FIGS. 3-5 can be implemented.

In the figures, elements and steps denoted by the same or similar reference numerals are associated with the same or similar elements and steps, unless indicated otherwise.

SUMMARY

In a first embodiment, a computer-implemented method is disclosed that includes receiving, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a

3

client device. The computer-implemented method includes matching client device 130 identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, identifying a shopping history for consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and requesting, through the application, an information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The computer-implemented method also includes verifying the identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and providing an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

In a second embodiment, a system is disclosed that includes a memory storing instructions, and one or more processors configured to execute the instructions to receive, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a client device. The one or more processors also execute instructions to match client device 130 identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, to identify a shopping history for consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and to request, through the application, an information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The one or more processors also execute instructions to verify an identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and to provide an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

In a third embodiment, a computer-implemented method is disclosed that includes identifying, at a remote server, a consumer at a point of sale location, wherein consumer checks out multiple products in a shopping basket. The computer-implemented method also includes informing consumer that a rebate is due on at least one product from the shopping basket, and instructing a network terminal to provide a valid rebate voucher for the at least one product, to consumer. The computer-implemented method also includes providing a running total of earned rebates and points for display in an application run in a client device used by consumer, and communicating to consumer whether the rebate has been credited to a consumer account accessible to the remote server.

In yet other embodiment, a system is disclosed that includes a means for storing instructions, and a means for executing the instructions to cause the system to receive, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a client device. The means for executing the instructions further executes the instructions to match client device 130 identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, to identify a shopping history for consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and to request, through the application, an information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The means for executing instructions also executes instructions to verify an identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and to provide an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

In a further embodiment, a computer-implemented method is disclosed that includes receiving, in a remote server, a request for validating an added value certificate from a consumer and receiving, in the remote server, an information for a location associated with consumer. The computer-implemented method also includes validating the added value certificate, and instructing a network terminal to

4

provide the validated added value certification at the location associated with consumer. The computer-implemented method also includes instructing the network terminal to provide an error message for consumer at the location, when the added value certificate is invalid.

In yet another embodiment, a computer-implemented method is disclosed that includes requesting, to a remote server, a validation of an added value certificate and providing, to the remote server, an information for a consumer location. The computer-implemented method also includes receiving the validated added value certificate as a printout or display from a network terminal in consumer location, or in a client device from the remote server.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following detailed description, numerous specific details are set forth to provide a full understanding of the present disclosure. It will be apparent, however, to one ordinarily skilled in the art that embodiments of the present disclosure may be practiced without some of these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and techniques have not been shown in detail so as not to obscure the disclosure.

General Overview

Although many examples provided herein describe a user's down-streaming activity being identifiable, each user may grant explicit permission for such user information to be shared or stored. The explicit permission may be granted using privacy controls integrated into the disclosed system. Each user may be provided notice that such user information will be shared with explicit consent, and each user may at any time terminate the information sharing, and may delete any stored user information. The stored user information may be encrypted to protect user security.

A network service provider as disclosed herein may desire that consumers who engage with a digital advertising be identified with a retailer shopper ID (e.g., a "consumer loyalty card"). To achieve a high level of certainty with which a retailer or a network service provided feel comfortable, several hurdles need to be overcome. On the one hand, no matter how many databases are cross-examined, there is always the possibility of misidentification of the person holding a client device and purporting to be consumer associated with a given loyalty card. On the other hand, automatically linking a client device identification (ID) for a consumer to a retail shopper ID for pushing advertisements (e.g., using a well-established third party database) may startle consumer ("How did that ad know that my Generic Store club card ID is 123456?!"), prompting a negative reaction. Furthermore, requesting that a consumer accurately enter a loyalty card ID for an advertisement introduces a likely insurmountable friction ("What's my Generic Store club card ID? 12654?") with consumer.

Embodiments as disclosed herein include methods and devices to resolve the above problems which arise in the realm of computer technology and mobile network devices.

Accordingly, embodiments as disclosed herein provide a low friction and highly effective method for pushing advertisements and offers from retailers to a consumer, making consumer a conscious participant of the transaction without demanding too much concentration or effort to provide critical information. Systems and methods as disclosed herein are able to determine consumer ID with a high degree of accuracy by combining information from the retailer and from third party identification databases. Specifically, embodiments as disclosed herein retrieve from the retailer a

detailed consumer history that can be matched with information requested from consumer. Accordingly, since it is highly probable that only consumer will know certain items of information in consumer history provided by the retailer, a verbal confirmation from consumer has a high degree of likelihood for a positive consumer ID.

Embodiments as disclosed herein include methods and devices to deliver value to a consumer according to a rebate offer that is redeemable digitally without the need to communicate with the existing POS or existing loyalty platform on the retailer end. Accordingly, embodiments as disclosed herein associate transactional data from the POS with a consumer that has selected rebate offers for certain products or brands. In some embodiments, the user selects and saves the rebate offers through a wallet app in a smartphone or other mobile client device. The system is then able to present the rebate to consumer at the POS, in real-time, while consumer is at cashier.

Accordingly, embodiments as disclosed herein provide a direct link to consumer that bypasses a POS device and any loyalty system or network linking consumer with the retailer or brand name associated with the rebate. Embodiments consistent with the present disclosure provide the convenience and simplicity of in-transaction rebates without the complexity of the POS system and the loyalty system. In some embodiments, systems as disclosed herein include real-time access to monitor transaction activity in the POS. Accordingly, a system as disclosed herein may remotely access information from the POS device without the need to request the information, or the need to wait for the POS device to provide the information. Thus, the system may be able to process the validation of the transaction against a rebate offer associated with the transaction customer in real time. In some embodiments, the latency of the rebate validation process may be governed by business policy rather than technology. Examples of POS devices may include, without limitation, a cash register machine at a cashier line, wherein the cash register machine may further include a scanning device (e.g., a barcode scanner, a radio-frequency identification—RFID—device, and the like) that the cashier may use to identify a price tag associated with a product in consumer shopping basket (e.g., a barcode scanner a radio-frequency identification—RFID—device, and the like). Accordingly, the POS device may be configured to access a remote server through the network, independently from consumer, who may also access the remote server through the network via a client device.

FIG. 1 illustrates a system 10 configured to identify consumers online through a remote server 100. A consumer 50 may have a loyalty card 120 associated with a retailer 115 (e.g., Supermarket A). The consumer and retailer 115 may be registered with the server, and may access the server through a network. A connection to the network is provided, in the case of consumer 50, by a client device, which may include any type of mobile computer appliance that may wirelessly communicate with the server through the network. The server may handle a database 110-1 that includes service accounts, for consumer 50 and for retailer 115. Accordingly, the server may also store in database 110-1 a consumer ID, including personal data such as a consumer history, consumer 50 identification being associated with a network identification of client device 130 (e.g., a cell phone number, when client device 130 is a smart phone). The consumer history in database 110-1 may include a specific history of consumer purchases with retailer 115. In some embodiments, consumer 50 history with retailer 115 may be associated with an account for retailer 115 in the database, rather

than with an account for consumer 50. In some embodiments the account for consumer 50 and the account for retailer 115 may be linked to each other in the database, e.g., through consumer 50 history.

The server may also have access to other consumer databases, e.g., database 110-2 and database 110-3, through the network. Hereinafter, databases 110-1, 110-2 and 110-3 will be collectively referred to as “databases 110.” Accordingly, the server may be configured to push certain targeted advertisements and offers to consumer 50 (e.g., a digital advertisement), the advertisements and offers associated with products in stores associated with retailer 115. Responsive to the advertisement pushed by the server, consumer 50 may request access to the product, or the offer or coupon associated with the product. In response, the server desirably acquires full, or almost full, certitude of the true identity of consumer 50 by requesting personal information based on consumer 50 history with retailer 115. This ensures maximum impact of the targeted advertisements and offers, protects the privacy of consumer 50, and also protects any value offered by retailer 115 in the target advertisement or offer. In some embodiments, it is consumer 50 that may request the server for advertisements, offers, and other benefits associated with retailer 115.

In some embodiments, an advertisement that is pushed to a consumer by the server for retailer 115 may include a request to verify an ID of consumer 50 by answering simple questions. The questions may include requests for information about past purchases. To consumer 50, these requests may feel non-invasive and easy to answer correctly (when consumer 50 is the correct match to consumer 50 history provided by retailer 115). Some exemplary questions that the server may push onto consumer 50 through client device 130 may include:

Which product have you or your family purchased within the past two months at a retailer 115 store?

- (a) milk (a very common product that consumer 50 will easily know they purchased);
- (b) Godiva Mini Indulgences Ice Cream Sandwiches (a very specific product that consumer 50 associated with client device 130 has never purchased, and from a category consumer 50 has never shopped, according to consumer 50 history provided by retailer 115); or
- (c) Angry Orchards Gluten Free Cranberry Peach Hard Cider (another very specific product consumer 50 has never purchased, from a category they have never shopped).

In some embodiments, the server may push one or more questions to consumer 50, depending on conversion ratios of each step (e.g., whether or not consumers tend to give correct answers at the first, second, or third questions, and the like). Upon selecting the correct answers, or at least one correct answer to multiple questions, consumer 50 will believe that we have carefully calculated their identity based on differential analysis of buying patterns. The format of the questions posed to consumer 50 may be multiple-choice questions, or fill-in the blank questions, or provide a text input questions. In some embodiments, the questions may be designed to elicit a response from consumer 50 that may indicate certain demographic group to which the user belongs (e.g., age—when the advertised product is an alcoholic product—).

FIG. 2 illustrates an information exchange scheme 200 between consumer 50, a retailer 115, and databases 110, according to some embodiments. Accordingly, each of databases 110, the server database, and database 215 of retailer 115, may have a specific consumer identity associated with

the network ID of client device **130**. The network ID of client device **130** is passed through every network hub and device that communicates with the client device, including those installed with the server, with retailer **115**, and with the servers hosting databases **110-2** and **110-3**. For example, database **110-2** may include a list **210-2** of E-type consumer IDs, and database **110-3** may include a list **210-3** of L-type consumer IDs. Due to multiple imperfections in the data collection system of this heterogeneous network of databases and players, there is a degree of mismatch and uncertainty in consumer **50** identification when consumer **50** itself is removed from the process. Such uncertainty and inaccuracies are especially prevalent in consumer **50** market arena, where consumers may provide incorrect, incomplete, inaccurate, or different information to databases **110-2**, **110-3**, retailer **115**, and even the remote server database **110-1**. Accordingly, there is a degree of uncertainty that all the information in each of the multiple players in FIG. 2 converges down to one true person: consumer **50**.

To fully verify the identity of consumer **50**, in some embodiments, the server uses a consumer history **225-1** for retailer **115** associated with an ID of client device **130**. Accordingly, the server may ask consumer **50** directly one or more specific questions associated with consumer history **225-1** in retailer **115**. In some embodiments, a consumer history **225-2** may be associated with any retailer, other than retailer **115**, and still be useful to the remote server to establish the ID of consumer **50**. Hereinafter, consumer histories **225-1** and **225-2** will be collectively referred to as “consumer history **225**.” When consumer **50** responds correctly a certain portion of the questions, the server may certify the identity of consumer **50**. Thereafter, the server may push advertisements and offers for products in retailer **115** to consumer **50**.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram **300** illustrating an example server **100** and client device **130** in the architecture **100** of FIG. 1, according to certain aspects of the disclosure. Client device **130** and server **100** are communicatively coupled over network **150** via respective communications modules **318-1** and **318-2** (hereinafter, collectively referred to as “communications modules **318**”). Communications modules **318** are configured to interface with network **150** to send and receive information, such as data, requests, responses, and commands to other devices on the network. Communications modules **318** can be, for example, modems or Ethernet cards. Client device **130** may be coupled with an input device **314** and with an output device **316**. Input device **314** may include a keyboard, a mouse, a pointer, or even a touch-screen display that a user (e.g., a consumer) may utilize to interact with client device **130**. Likewise, output device **316** may include a display and a speaker with which the user may retrieve results from client device **130**. Client device **130** may also include a processor **312-1**, configured to execute instructions stored in a memory **320-1**, and to cause client device **130** to perform at least some of the steps in methods consistent with the present disclosure. Memory **320-1** may further include an application **322** including specific instructions which, when executed by processor **312-1**, cause an advertisement payload **325** from server **100** to be displayed for consumer **50**. Advertisement payload **325** may include multiple digital promotions or coupons presented to consumer **50** by server **100**, and consumer **50** may store at least some of the digital promotions or coupons from advertisement payload **325** in memory **320-1**.

Server **100** includes a memory **320-2**, a processor **312-2**, and communications module **318-2**. Processor **312-2** is configured to execute instructions, such as instructions

physically coded into processor **312-2**, instructions received from software in memory **320-2**, or a combination of both. Memory **320-2** includes an advertisement engine **342** for integrating images, videos, and other multimedia files into advertisement payload **325**. Advertisement engine **342** may push advertisements to a user of client device **130** that is a consumer of a retailer store (e.g., retailer **115**) or chain of stores through application **322** or a web browser installed in client device **130**. Accordingly, application **322** may be installed by server **100** and perform scripts and other routines provided by server **100**. In some embodiments, application **322** may be configured to display advertisement payload **325** provided by advertisement engine **342**. Hereinafter, processors **312-1** and **312-2**, and memories **320-1** and **320-2** will be collectively referred to as “processors **312**” and “memories **320**,” respectively.

Block diagram **300** includes consumer database **310-1**, E-consumer database **310-2**, and L-consumer database **310-3** (hereinafter, collectively referred to as “consumer databases **310**”). Consumer databases **310** may be associated to different retailers or services to which consumer **50** subscribes to, or is a member of. An algorithm **344** in memory **320-2** stores commands which, when executed by processor **320-2**, cause server **100** to correlate databases **310** to find one or more IDs associated with the same consumer **50** that is uploading or interacting with advertisement payload **325** through application **322** in client device **130**. Algorithm **344** may include a neural network (NN) trained over databases **310**.

FIG. 4 is a flow chart illustrating steps in a method **400** for identifying a consumer online, according to some embodiments. In some embodiments, at least one or more of the steps in method **400** may be partially or fully performed by a computer device including a processor, a memory, and a communications module (e.g., client device **130**, server **100**, processors **312**, memories **320**, and communications modules **318**). The communications modules may enable the computer devices to communicate with each other through a network (e.g., network **150**). The processors may execute instructions stored as an application or an algorithm in the memories, to perform at least some of the steps in method **400** (e.g., application **322** and algorithm **344**). In some embodiments, the memories in method **400** may include external databases accessible to the computer device via the network (e.g., databases **310**).

Embodiments consistent with the present disclosure may include methods having at least one step similar to any of the steps in method **400**. Furthermore, methods consistent with the present disclosure may include any of the steps in method **400** performed in any order. For example, in some embodiments a method as disclosed herein may include at least one or more of the steps in method **400** performed in reverse order, simultaneously, almost simultaneously, or overlapping in time.

Step **402** includes receiving, from a consumer, a client device identification through the application running in the client device. In some embodiments, step **402** includes providing to consumer **50**, through the application in the client device, an advertisement for the product in the retail store before receiving client device identification. In some embodiments, step **402** includes receiving, from consumer **50**, a second client device identification from a second client device associated with a same loyalty card for the retail store.

Step **404** includes matching client device identification with a loyalty card for a retail store.

Step 406 includes identifying a shopping history for consumer 50, the shopping history associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card. In some embodiments, step 406 the shopping history is associated with multiple retail stores and services, and step 406 includes querying consumer 50 about multiple items purchased in the retail stores or services.

Step 408 includes requesting, through the application, an information from consumer 50, based on the shopping history. In some embodiments, step 408 includes querying consumer 50 about one or more items in the shopping history.

Step 410 includes verifying the identity of consumer 50 when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer 50. In some embodiments, step 410 includes performing a differential analysis of buying patterns for consumer 50 based on the shopping history. In some embodiments, step 410 includes correlating client device identification with multiple databases associated with multiple retail stores. In some embodiments, step 410 includes mapping the identity of consumer 50 to client device identification and storing a map including client device identification in a database. In some embodiments, step 410 includes verifying that consumer 50 provides at least one correct answer to multiple questions based on the shopping history.

Step 412 includes providing an offer to consumer 50, through the application in the client devices, of a product in the retail store. In some embodiments, step 412 includes applying the offer to consumer 50 when consumer 50 purchases the product in the retail store.

FIG. 5 illustrates a system 500 configured to provide a real-time, POS consumer rebate. Consumer 50 stands in front of a POS 550 with a shopping basket 530 containing products selected by consumer 50. A cashier 55 scans each of the products in shopping basket 530 using a POS device 511, which is communicatively coupled with remote server 100 via network 150 (e.g., through an Ethernet link, an optical link, a wireless link, a cellular network, and the like). Accordingly, remote server 100 may have direct access to a list of the products in shopping basket 530, as they are scanned by the cashier. In addition to POS device 511, POS 550 may also include a network terminal 501 and an identification (ID) device 510 having a POS ID 521. Remote server 100 verifies consumer 50 identity and location by accessing database 110-1 that includes information about consumer 50, an added value certificate 520 handled by consumer 50 (e.g., a coupon, a rebate offer, and the like), and the retail store associated with POS 550 (e.g., retailer 115). Network terminal 501 may be communicatively coupled with ID device 510 and with remote server 100 via network 150 (e.g., through an Ethernet link, an optical link, a wireless link, a cellular network, and the like). In that regard, in some embodiments network terminal 501 and ID device 510 may be directly coupled with remote server 100, separately from POS device 511. In some embodiments, network terminal 501 and ID device 510 may be also coupled with POS device 511. Accordingly, in some embodiments network terminal 501 includes a printer configured to print a validated certificate to consumer 50. In some embodiments, network terminal 501 includes a secondary display configured to display a validated certificate for consumer 50, or a validation token for the certificate handed by consumer 50.

The ID device 510 may include a camera or any other sensor configured to detect and identify consumer 50 as consumer 50 stands or moves across POS 550. The POS ID may include a quad code, a barcode, a Rivest-Shamir-

Adelman (RSA) code, and the like, that identifies POS 550 (e.g., the shopping line). In some embodiments, POS ID 521 is time varying, according to a pre-selected pattern. Thus, when the customer is performing the transaction, he/she may take a picture of POS ID 521 with a client device and provide the picture to the remote server through the network (e.g., through a cellular network, a WiFi network, or any other wireless network), the remote server is able to determine when and where (e.g., on which line) the customer is located at POS 550, performing the transaction. In some embodiments, client device 130 has an application that is hosted by the remote server.

With the information from the client device, and the shopping list scanned by the cashier 55 with POS device 511, the remote server is able to establish with confidence (e.g., within a few minutes, given the time resolution of POS ID 521) that a rebate for at least one or more of the products in the shopping basket is due to the customer. The rebates may then be applied from the server to POS 550, or credited to the user account.

In some embodiments, ID device 510 may include any combination of biomarker sensors in addition to picture, such as voice, fingerprint, and the like. For example, ID device 510 may include Wi-Fi repeaters (listening and broadcasting) generating a row of signals. Moreover, in some embodiments ID device 510 is configured to identify consumer 50 through the client device. Accordingly, ID device 510 may wirelessly communicate with client device 130 to request ID information about consumer 50. In some embodiments ID device 510 may include proximity detectors to detect client device 130 or other wearable devices, and determine the presence of consumer 50 at the line identified by POS ID 521. Some of the wireless identification techniques between ID device 510 and client device 130 or other wearable devices worn by consumer 50 may include different types and combinations of acoustic communication: supersonic, subsonic, or audible. In some embodiments, the remote server may determine the precise location and timing of consumer 50 (e.g., which POS line and at what time) by triangulating or multiplexing different types of signals from different sensors in the store or the vicinity of POS 550 (e.g., sensor fusion).

In some embodiments, the remote server may associate the rebate and consumer 50 by collecting information about the payment method used by consumer 50 at POS 550 (e.g., debit or credit card). For example, a credit card server hosting a consumer account used by consumer 50 to pay for the shopping basket at POS 550 may provide the store transaction to the remote server. The remote server scans the report from the credit card server and compares it with a report received from POS device 511 listing the transactions occurred during a certain period of time, and the products that have been purchased. The remote server then pairs the credit card holder to a specific transaction at POS 550, and determines, based on the transaction, whether a rebate is due to consumer 50.

In some embodiments, the remote server may infer the association between consumer 50 and the transaction involving a product on rebate by inference. Accordingly consumer 50 may use an application installed in client device 130 by the remote server, to register each of the products in the shopping basket, or at least the items subject to a rebate. When consumer 50 checks out at POS 550, the remote server may correlate the shopping basket received directly from consumer 50 through the application, and at least one shopping basket scanned at POS 550. Thus, the remote

11

server may determine which lane the user is located and at what time, to apply and validate rebates.

In some embodiments, associating consumer **50** to a transaction including a specific shopping basket may include a direct communication between the remote server and consumer **50**. For example, in some embodiments when a consumer is detected (e.g., via a proximity sensor, a motion sensor, and the like) near POS **550**, the remote server requests from consumer **50** via client device **130** to confirm their specific location (e.g., in which lane). In some embodiments, ID device **510** at POS **550** may be a camera that takes a picture of consumer **50**. The consumer may also take a picture of the receipt with client device **130** (showing a total dollar amount of the transaction). The remote server may compare consumer **50** receipt with more detailed transaction data obtained through the network coupling between POS device **511** and the remote server, using the total amount in the user receipt. In some embodiments, the remote server may include, after comparing consumer **50** data with data from POS device **511**, a few more security screening questions to consumer **50** via the client device. For example, in some embodiments the remote server may ask consumer **50** more detailed questions about the shopping basket, e.g., “which of the following four other items did you buy together with the rebate article?” The remote server then validates the association between consumer **50** and a transaction for the rebate product.

When the remote server verifies that consumer **50** is entitled to a rebate the remote server may print a rebate receipt at network terminal **501** for consumer **50** at checkout. In some embodiments, the remote server prints out a “real” check for consumer **50** at network terminal **501**. In some embodiments, the remote server prints a voucher redeemable at POS **550** in the same transaction, or in a future transaction. In that regard, the printed voucher may stay with consumer **50** or may be used by the cashier as part of payment. With the voucher, the remote server may credit a consumer account in the rebate amount. In some embodiments, the remote server may provide the rebate funds to POS **550** at the transaction point before closure of the transaction event. In yet other embodiments, the remote server may credit the rebate amount to a credit card holder for consumer **50** with which the remote server has an account, through the network. In some embodiments, the remote server may inform a brand application installed in client device **130** that they are responsible to credit consumer **50** in the rebate amount. Further, in some embodiments the remote server pushes rebate payment through a network based payment service or application to which consumer **50** has subscribed through the client device.

FIG. 6 illustrates steps in a method **600** for identifying and applying real-time, point of sale consumer rebates at a POS through a remote server. In some embodiments, at least one or more of the steps in method **600** may be partially or fully performed by a computer device including a processor, a memory, and a communications module (e.g., client device **130**, server **100**, processors **312**, memories **320**, and communications modules **318**). The communications modules may enable the computer devices to communicate with each other through a network (e.g., network **150**). The processors may execute instructions stored as an application or an algorithm in the memories, to perform at least some of the steps in method **600** (e.g., application **322** and algorithm **344**). In some embodiments, the memories in method **600** may include external databases accessible to the computer device via the network (e.g., databases **310**).

12

In some embodiments, method **600** may include a consumer logging into a retail store application installed in the client device and selecting a rebate, or an offer (\$1 off of a 12-pack of COKE). The retail store application communicates to the remote server that the consumer has selected the rebate. In some embodiments, the retail store application provides an identification of the consumer to the remote server (e.g., a number at the “Stop and Shop” card number serviced by the retail store application). The remote server may store the rebate or offer as reported by the retail store application in the database, for future use when consumer is identified at a specific store purchasing the rebate product. Embodiments consistent with the present disclosure may include methods having at least one step similar to any of the steps in method **600**. Furthermore, methods consistent with the present disclosure may include any of the steps in method **600** performed in any order. For example, in some embodiments a method as disclosed herein may include at least one or more of the steps in method **600** performed in reverse order, simultaneously, almost simultaneously, or overlapping in time.

Step **602** includes identifying a consumer at a POS location, wherein the consumer checks out multiple products in a shopping basket. In some embodiments, step **602** includes identifying a scanning of the universal product code (UPC) for the rebate product with the POS device (e.g., identifying a 12-pack of coke). Further, in some embodiments step **602** includes identifying a scan of the consumer Stop and Shop card and identifying the consumer. In some embodiments, step **602** includes correlating the multiple products checked out by a point of sale device at the point of sale location with an identity of the consumer at the point of sale location.

Step **604** includes informing the consumer that a rebate is due on at least one product from the shopping basket. In some embodiments, step **604** includes communicating to the consumer client device a reminder of an applicable rebate at the POS (e.g., the 12-pack coke rebate) when the remote server identifies the presence of the consumer at the POS, and the purchasing of the rebate product at the same or closely related times. In some embodiments, step **604** includes identifying the lane at the POS where the consumer is. For example, in some embodiments step **604** may include matching the consumer identification in the loyalty card presented at a POS with a rebate offer due to the consumer and stored in the remote server database.

Step **606** includes instructing the network terminal to provide a valid rebate voucher for at least one product. In some embodiments, step **606** may include instructing a printer coupled with the network terminal to print the valid rebate voucher for the at least one product.

Step **608** includes providing a running total of earned rebates and points for display in an application run in a consumer client device.

Step **610** includes communicating to the consumer whether the rebate has been credited to a consumer account accessible to the remote server. In some embodiments, step **610** may include choosing to immediately apply the rebate to the transaction or to credit the rebate for the transaction to the loyalty card account. In some embodiments, step **610** includes crediting the rebate to the consumer account after the consumer has purchased the at least one product.

FIG. 7 illustrates steps in a method **700** for real-time, remote validation of added value certificates (e.g., added value certificate **520**). At POS **550**, consumer **50** presents the added value certificate to the cashier, who scans it using the POS device (e.g., cashier **55** and POS device **511**). An

architecture to perform the illustrated method includes a device for reading a code (e.g., POS device **511**), a central server for applying business rules, logic and validation (e.g. remote server **100**) and an end point for conveying information as to what was the result of the business rules to consumer **50** (e.g., network terminal **501** communicatively coupled with remote server **100**).

In some embodiments, consumer **50** may be enticed in step **702** to scan an added value certificate such as a coupon **720-1**, a digital coupon **720-2**, or a voucher **720-3** (hereinafter, collectively referred to as “added value certificates **720**”). Added value certificates **720** may be part of a sweepstakes campaign from a retail store, e.g., a sign at the store may indicate that “the 1000th person who scans a coupon (any coupon), is going to get a voucher printed worth One Thousand dls.” The added value certificate may be a savings offer (e.g., save \$1 in the purchase of certain product), a voucher (e.g., a \$5.00 voucher), or a coupon displayed on a smartphone screen (e.g., a \$2.00 coupon redeemable at the store). Remote server **100** has access to the scanned document through the network connection with the POS device. In some embodiments, the client device provides added value certificate **720** to remote server **100**, for validation in addition to, or instead of, using a scanner in the POS device. Further, in some embodiments consumer **50** may provide added value certificate **720** to remote server **100**, for validation, by presenting added value certificate **720** to the ID device (to capture an image of the added value certificate). In step **704**, remote server **100** authenticates (confirms) added value certificate **720** by checking items such as: authenticity, multiple use, availability of a product associated with the certificate (e.g., quantity, location and the like), and terms, conditions and business rules associated with the certificate, and consumer **50** ID. In some embodiments, remote server **100** also identifies, in step **704**, the location of consumer **50** based on information on consumer **50** obtained from POS **550** (e.g., the POS identification device) tying consumer **50** to the POS location at a given time.

In some embodiments, remote server **100** retrieves added value certificate **720** from consumer **50**, at POS **550**, an identification of the POS location (e.g., via the ID device), and the content of the shopping basket (e.g., from the POS device).

Upon validation, the remote server sends a validation message in step **706** to network terminal **501** (at the identified POS location). In some embodiments, the validation message may include a command to print, in step **708**, an alert about an invalid certificate (sad tune, step **710B**), or to print a validated certificate for consumer **50** (e.g., a certified voucher for \$5.00 and the like, accompanied by a happy tune, step **710A**). The printout is a solid affirmation of the status of consumer **50** certificate. In some embodiments, the validated certificate may be used at POS **550** by consumer **50**. In case that the validation fails, remote server **100** may instruct the network terminal to print out a ticket indicating an error, and a reason for the error (e.g., certificate already used, or expired on such date, and the like). In some embodiments, the validated certificate may be sent to any other touch point to reach consumer **50**, e.g., remote server **100** may provide a message to the client device: “the certificate expired three days ago.”

Accordingly, embodiments as disclosed herein may identify fraudulent added value certificates without potentially involving the cashier in a dispute with consumer **50**. More generally, in embodiments consistent with the present disclosure POS **550** is not configured to perform validation of

added value certificates (e.g., vouchers, coupons, rebate offers and the like) issued by remote server **100**. In some embodiments, remote server **100** may provide the authentication result to the vendor at POS **550**, for the vendor to decide what it wants to do with the result (fraud/valid).

FIG. **8** is a flow chart illustrating steps in a method **800** for providing real-time, point of sale validation of added value certificates (e.g., added value certificate **520**), according to some embodiments. In some embodiments, at least one or more of the steps in method **800** may be partially or fully performed by a computer device including a processor, a memory, and a communications module (e.g., client device **130**, server **100**, processors **312**, memories **320**, and communications modules **318**). The communications modules may enable the computer devices to communicate with each other through a network (e.g., network **150**). The processors may execute instructions stored as an application or an algorithm in the memories, to perform at least some of the steps in method **800** (e.g., application **322** and algorithm **344**). In some embodiments, the memories in method **800** may include external databases accessible to the computer device via the network (e.g., databases **310**).

In some embodiments, method **800** may include a consumer logging into a retail store application installed in client device **130** and selecting a rebate, or an offer (\$1 off of a 12-pack of COKE). The retail store application communicates to the remote server that the consumer has selected the rebate. In some embodiments, the retail store application provides an identification of the consumer to the remote server (e.g., a number at the “Stop and Shop” card number serviced by the retail store application). The remote server may store the rebate or offer as reported by the retail store application in the database for future use when the consumer is identified at a specific store purchasing the rebate product. Embodiments consistent with the present disclosure may include methods having at least one step similar to any of the steps in method **800**. Furthermore, methods consistent with the present disclosure may include any of the steps in method **800** performed in any order. For example, in some embodiments a method as disclosed herein may include at least one or more of the steps in method **800** performed in reverse order, simultaneously, almost simultaneously, or overlapping in time.

Step **802** includes receiving, in a remote server, a request for validating an added value certificate from a consumer.

Step **804** includes receiving, in the remote, server, an information for a location associated with the consumer. In some embodiments, step **806** includes determining a position of the consumer within a POS (e.g., a specific cashier’s lane and the like) through a passive engagement between a consumer characteristic (e.g., an image of the consumer, or of a fiducial or barcode in a consumer client device) and alignment with POS systems.

Step **806** includes validating the added value certificate.

Step **808** includes instructing a network terminal collocated with the consumer, to provide the validated added value certificate to the consumer.

Step **810** includes instructing the network terminal to provide an error message for the consumer when the added value certificate is invalid.

Hardware Overview

FIG. **9** is a block diagram illustrating an example computer system **900** with which the client and network device of FIG. **1** and the methods of FIGS. **4-5** can be implemented. In certain aspects, computer system **900** may be implemented using hardware or a combination of software and

hardware, either in a dedicated network device, or integrated into another entity, or distributed across multiple entities.

Computer system **900** (e.g., client device **130** and remote server **100**) includes a bus **908** or other communication mechanism for communicating information, and a processor **902** (e.g., processors **312**) coupled with bus **908** for processing information. By way of example, the computer system **900** may be implemented with one or more processors **902**. Processor **902** may be a general-purpose micro-processor, a microcontroller, a Digital Signal Processor (DSP), an Application Specific Integrated Circuit (ASIC), a Field Programmable Gate Array (FPGA), a Programmable Logic Device (PLD), a controller, a state machine, gated logic, discrete hardware components, or any other suitable entity that can perform calculations or other manipulations of information.

Computer system **900** can include, in addition to hardware, code that creates an execution environment for the computer program in question, e.g., code that constitutes processor firmware, a protocol stack, a database management system, an operating system, or a combination of one or more of them stored in an included memory **904** (e.g., memories **320**), such as a Random Access Memory (RAM), a flash memory, a Read Only Memory (ROM), a Programmable Read-Only Memory (PROM), an Erasable PROM (EPROM), registers, a hard disk, a removable disk, a CD-ROM, a DVD, or any other suitable storage device, coupled to bus **908** for storing information and instructions to be executed by processor **902**. The processor **902** and the memory **904** can be supplemented by, or incorporated in, special purpose logic circuitry.

The instructions may be stored in the memory **904** and implemented in one or more computer program consumer products, e.g., one or more modules of computer program instructions encoded on a computer readable medium for execution by, or to control the operation of, the computer system **900**, and according to any method well known to those of skill in the art, including, but not limited to, computer languages such as data-oriented languages (e.g., SQL, dBase), system languages (e.g., C, Objective-C, C++, Assembly), architectural languages (e.g., Java, .NET), and application languages (e.g., PHP, Ruby, Perl, Python). Instructions may also be implemented in computer languages such as array languages, aspect-oriented languages, assembly languages, authoring languages, command line interface languages, compiled languages, concurrent languages, curly-bracket languages, dataflow languages, data-structured languages, declarative languages, esoteric languages, extension languages, fourth-generation languages, functional languages, interactive mode languages, interpreted languages, iterative languages, list-based languages, little languages, logic-based languages, machine languages, macro languages, metaprogramming languages, multiparadigm languages, numerical analysis, non-English-based languages, object-oriented class-based languages, object-oriented prototype-based languages, off-side rule languages, procedural languages, reflective languages, rule-based languages, scripting languages, stack-based languages, synchronous languages, syntax handling languages, visual languages, wirth languages, and xml-based languages. Memory **904** may also be used for storing temporary variable or other intermediate information during execution of instructions to be executed by processor **902**.

A computer program as discussed herein does not necessarily correspond to a file in a file system. A program can be stored in a portion of a file that holds other programs or data (e.g., one or more scripts stored in a markup language

document), in a single file dedicated to the program in question, or in multiple coordinated files (e.g., files that store one or more modules, subprograms, or portions of code). A computer program can be deployed to be executed on one computer or on multiple computers that are located at one site or distributed across multiple sites and interconnected by a communication network. The processes and logic flows described in this specification can be performed by one or more programmable processors executing one or more computer programs to perform functions by operating on input data and generating output.

Computer system **900** further includes a data storage device **906** such as a magnetic disk or optical disk, coupled to bus **908** for storing information and instructions. Computer system **900** may be coupled via input/output module **910** to various devices. Input/output module **910** can be any input/output module. Exemplary input/output modules **910** include data ports such as USB ports. The input/output module **910** is configured to connect to a communications module **912**. Exemplary communications modules **912** (e.g., communications modules **318**) include networking interface cards, such as Ethernet cards and modems. In certain aspects, input/output module **910** is configured to connect to a plurality of devices, such as an input device **914** (e.g., input device **314**) and/or an output device **916** (e.g., output device **316**). Exemplary input devices **914** include a keyboard and a pointing device, e.g., a mouse or a trackball, by which a user can provide input to the computer system **900**. Other kinds of input devices **914** can be used to provide for interaction with a user as well, such as a tactile input device, visual input device, audio input device, or brain-computer interface device. For example, feedback provided to the user can be any form of sensory feedback (e.g., visual feedback, auditory feedback, or tactile feedback), and input from the user can be received in any form, including acoustic, speech, tactile, or brain wave input. Exemplary output devices **916** include display devices, such as an LCD (liquid crystal display) monitor, for displaying information to the user.

According to one aspect of the present disclosure, client device **130** and server **100** can be implemented using a computer system **900** in response to processor **902** executing one or more sequences of one or more instructions contained in memory **904**. Such instructions may be read into memory **904** from another machine-readable medium, such as data storage device **906**. Execution of the sequences of instructions contained in main memory **904** causes processor **902** to perform the process steps described herein. One or more processors in a multi-processing arrangement may also be employed to execute the sequences of instructions contained in memory **904**. In alternative aspects, hard-wired circuitry may be used in place of, or in combination with, software instructions to implement various aspects of the present disclosure. Thus, aspects of the present disclosure are not limited to any specific combination of hardware circuitry and software.

Various aspects of the subject matter described in this specification can be implemented in a computing system that includes a back-end component, e.g., a data network device, or that includes a middleware component, e.g., an application network device, or that includes a front-end component, e.g., a client computer having a graphical user interface or a Web browser through which a user can interact with an implementation of the subject matter described in this specification, or any combination of one or more such back-end, middleware, or front-end components. The components of the system can be interconnected by any form or medium of digital data communication (e.g., a communication net-

work). The communication network (e.g., network **150**) can include, for example, any one or more of a LAN, a WAN, the Internet, and the like. Further, the communication network can include, but is not limited to, for example, any one or more of the following network topologies, including a bus network, a star network, a ring network, a mesh network, a star-bus network, tree or hierarchical network, or the like. The communications modules can be, for example, modems or Ethernet cards.

Computer system **900** can include clients and network devices. A client and network device are generally remote from each other and typically interact through a communication network. The relationship of a client and network device arises by virtue of computer programs running on the respective computers and having a client-network device relationship to each other. Computer system **900** can be, for example, and without limitation, a desktop computer, laptop computer, or tablet computer. Computer system **900** can also be embedded in another device, for example, and without limitation, a mobile telephone, a PDA, a mobile audio player, a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver, a video game console, and/or a television set top box.

The term “machine-readable storage medium” or “computer-readable medium” as used herein refers to any medium or media that participates in providing instructions to processor **902** for execution. Such a medium may take many forms, including, but not limited to, non-volatile media, volatile media, and transmission media. Non-volatile media include, for example, optical or magnetic disks, such as data storage device **906**. Volatile media include dynamic memory, such as memory **904**. Transmission media include coaxial cables, copper wire, and fiber optics, including the wires forming bus **908**. Common forms of machine-readable media include, for example, floppy disk, a flexible disk, hard disk, magnetic tape, any other magnetic medium, a CD-ROM, DVD, any other optical medium, punch cards, paper tape, any other physical medium with patterns of holes, a RAM, a PROM, an EPROM, a FLASH EPROM, any other memory chip or cartridge, or any other medium from which a computer can read. The machine-readable storage medium can be a machine-readable storage device, a machine-readable storage substrate, a memory device, a composition of matter affecting a machine-readable propagated signal, or a combination of one or more of them.

Embodiments disclosed herein include:

A. A computer-implemented method that includes receiving, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a client device. The computer-implemented method includes matching client device **130** identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, identifying a shopping history for consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and requesting, through the application, any information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The computer-implemented method also includes verifying the identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and providing an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

B. A system that includes memory storing instructions, and one or more processors configured to execute the instructions to receive, from a consumer, a client device identification through an application running in a client device. The one or more processors also execute instructions to match client device **130** identification with a loyalty card for a retail store, to identify a shopping history for consumer,

associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card, and to request, through the application, any information from consumer, based on the shopping history. The one or more processors also execute instructions to verify an identity of consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for consumer, and to provide an offer to consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

C. A computer-implemented method that includes identifying, at a remote server, a consumer at a point of sale location, wherein consumer checks out multiple products in a shopping basket. The computer-implemented method also includes informing consumer that a rebate is due on at least one product from the shopping basket, and instructing a network terminal to provide a valid rebate voucher for at least one product, to consumer. The computer-implemented method also includes providing a running total of earned rebates and points for display in an application run in a client device used by consumer, and communicating to consumer whether the rebate has been credited to a consumer account accessible to the remote server.

Each of embodiments A, B, and C may have one or more of the following additional elements in any combination, as follows. Element **1**, wherein requesting the information from consumer includes querying consumer about one or more items in the shopping history. Element **2**, wherein verifying the identity of consumer includes performing a differential analysis of buying patterns for consumer based on the shopping history. Element **3**, wherein verifying the identity of consumer includes correlating client device **130** identification with multiple databases associated with multiple retail stores. Element **4**, further includes mapping the identity of consumer to client device **130** identification and storing a map including client device **130** identification in a database. Element **5**, wherein verifying the identity of consumer includes verifying that consumer provides at least one correct answer to multiple questions based on the shopping history. Element **6**, further includes providing to consumer, through the application in the client device, an advertisement for the product in the retail store before receiving client device **130** identification. Element **7**, further includes applying the offer to consumer when consumer purchases the product in the retail store. Element **8**, further includes receiving, from consumer, a second client device identification from a second client device associated with a same loyalty card for the retail store. Element **9**, wherein the shopping history for consumer is associated with multiple retail stores and services, and requesting any information from consumer includes querying consumer about multiple items purchased in the retail stores or services.

Element **10**, further includes crediting the rebate to consumer account after consumer has purchased at least one product. And element **11**, further includes correlating the multiple products checked out by a point of sale device at the point of sale location with an identity of consumer at the point of sale location.

In one aspect, a method may be an operation, an instruction, or a function and vice versa. In one aspect, a claim may be amended to include some or all of the words (e.g., instructions, operations, functions, or components) recited in one or more words, one or more sentences, one or more phrases, one or more paragraphs, and/or one or more claims.

To illustrate the interchangeability of hardware and software, items such as the various illustrative blocks, modules, components, methods, operations, instructions, and algorithms have been described generally in terms of their

functionality. Whether such functionality is implemented as hardware, software, or a combination of hardware and software depends upon the particular application and design constraints imposed on the overall system. Skilled artisans may implement the described functionality in varying ways for each particular application.

As used herein, the phrase “at least one of” preceding a series of items, with the terms “and” or “or” to separate any of the items, modifies the list as a whole, rather than each member of the list (e.g., each item). The phrase “at least one of” does not require selection of at least one item; rather, the phrase allows a meaning that includes at least one of any one of the items, and/or at least one of any combination of the items, and/or at least one of each of the items. By way of example, the phrases “at least one of X, Y, and Z” or “at least one of X, Y, or Z” each refer to only X, only Y, or only Z; any combination of X, Y, and Z; and/or at least one of each of X, Y, and Z.

The word “exemplary” is used herein to mean “serving as an example, instance, or illustration.” Any embodiment described herein as “exemplary” is not necessarily to be construed as preferred or advantageous over other embodiments. Phrases such as an aspect, the aspect, another aspect, some aspects, one or more aspects, an implementation, the implementation, another implementation, some implementations, one or more implementations, an embodiment, the embodiment, another embodiment, some embodiments, one or more embodiments, a configuration, the configuration, another configuration, some configurations, one or more configurations, the subject technology, the disclosure, the present disclosure, other variations thereof and alike are for convenience and do not imply that a disclosure relating to such phrase(s) is essential to the subject technology or that such disclosure applies to all configurations of the subject technology. A disclosure relating to such phrase(s) may apply to all configurations, or one or more configurations. A disclosure relating to such phrase(s) may provide one or more examples. A phrase such as an aspect or some aspects may refer to one or more aspects and vice versa, and this applies similarly to other foregoing phrases.

A reference to an element in the singular is not intended to mean “one and only one” unless specifically stated, but rather “one or more.” Pronouns in the masculine (e.g., his) include the feminine and neuter gender (e.g., her and its) and vice versa. The term “some” refers to one or more. Underlined and/or italicized headings and subheadings are used for convenience only, do not limit the subject technology, and are not referred to in connection with the interpretation of the description of the subject technology. Relational terms such as first and second and the like may be used to distinguish one entity or action from another without necessarily requiring or implying any actual such relationship or order between such entities or actions. All structural and functional equivalents to the elements of the various configurations described throughout this disclosure that are known or later come to be known to those of ordinary skill in the art are expressly incorporated herein by reference and intended to be encompassed by the subject technology. Moreover, nothing disclosed herein is intended to be dedicated to the public regardless of whether such disclosure is explicitly recited in the above description. No claim element is to be construed under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph, unless the element is expressly recited using the phrase “means for” or, in the case of a method claim, the element is recited using the phrase “step for.”

While this specification contains many specifics, these should not be construed as limitations on the scope of what

may be described, but rather as descriptions of particular implementations of the subject matter. Certain features that are described in this specification in the context of separate embodiments can also be implemented in combination in a single embodiment. Conversely, various features that are described in the context of a single embodiment can also be implemented in multiple embodiments separately or in any suitable subcombination. Moreover, although features may be described above as acting in certain combinations and even initially described as such, one or more features from a described combination can in some cases be excised from the combination, and the described combination may be directed to a subcombination or variation of a subcombination.

The subject matter of this specification has been described in terms of particular aspects, but other aspects can be implemented and are within the scope of the following claims. For example, while operations are depicted in the drawings in a particular order, this should not be understood as requiring that such operations be performed in the particular order shown or in sequential order, or that all illustrated operations be performed, to achieve desirable results. The actions recited in the claims can be performed in a different order and still achieve desirable results. As one example, the processes depicted in the accompanying figures do not necessarily require the particular order shown, or sequential order, to achieve desirable results. In certain circumstances, multitasking and parallel processing may be advantageous. Moreover, the separation of various system components in the aspects described above should not be understood as requiring such separation in all aspects, and it should be understood that the described program components and systems can generally be integrated together in a single software product or packaged into multiple software consumer products.

The title, background, brief description of the drawings, abstract, and drawings are hereby incorporated into the disclosure and are provided as illustrative examples of the disclosure, not as restrictive descriptions. It is submitted with the understanding that they will not be used to limit the scope or meaning of the claims. In addition, in the detailed description, it can be seen that the description provides illustrative examples and the various features are grouped together in various implementations for the purpose of streamlining the disclosure. The method of disclosure is not to be interpreted as reflecting an intention that the described subject matter requires more features than are expressly recited in each claim. Rather, as the claims reflect, inventive subject matter lies in less than all features of a single disclosed configuration or operation. The claims are hereby incorporated into the detailed description, with each claim standing on its own as a separately described subject matter.

The claims are not intended to be limited to the aspects described herein, but are to be accorded the full scope consistent with the language claims and to encompass all legal equivalents. Notwithstanding, none of the claims are intended to embrace subject matter that fails to satisfy the requirements of the applicable patent law, nor should they be interpreted in such a way.

What is claimed is:

1. A computer-implemented method, comprising:
 - matching, in a remote server, a client device identification with a loyalty card for a retail store;
 - identifying a shopping history for a consumer, associated with the retail store, in a database, based on the loyalty card;

21

requesting, through an application running in a client device, an information from the consumer, based on the shopping history;

verifying, in the remote server, an identity of the consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for the consumer, wherein verifying the identity of the consumer further comprises comparing different buying patterns for the consumer based on the shopping history;

providing, from the remote server, an offer to the consumer, through an application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store;

correlating multiple items in a shopping basket received from the consumer through the application running in the client device with multiple items in a shopping basket scanned by a point of sale device;

validating an offer to the consumer at a time and a place for a consumer transaction; and

providing, from the remote server, the offer to the consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

2. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein requesting the information from the consumer comprises querying the consumer about one or more items in the shopping history.

3. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein verifying an identity of the consumer comprises receiving, from the client device, an identifier for a point of sale device, the identifier comprising a pre-selected time-varying pattern.

4. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein verifying an identity of the consumer comprises correlating the client device identification with multiple databases associated with multiple retail stores.

5. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein verifying an identity of the consumer further comprises receiving, from the client device, an identifier for a point of sale device the identifier comprising a pre-selected time-varying pattern identifying a time and a place for a consumer transaction before the consumer transaction occurs.

6. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein verifying an identity of the consumer comprises verifying that the consumer provides at least one correct answer to multiple questions based on the shopping history.

7. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising identifying a time and a place for a consumer transaction before the consumer transaction occurs based on a pre-selected time-varying pattern and a correlation with the point of sale device.

8. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising applying the offer to the consumer when the consumer purchases the product in the retail store.

9. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, further comprising receiving, from the consumer, a second client device identification from a second client device associated with a same loyalty card for the retail store.

10. The computer-implemented method of claim 1, wherein the shopping history for the consumer is associated with multiple stores, and requesting an information from the consumer comprises querying the consumer about multiple items purchased in the stores.

11. A system, comprising:
a memory circuit storing multiple instructions; and
one or more processors configured to execute the instructions to cause the system to:

22

identify a shopping history for a consumer, associated with a retail store, in a database, based on a loyalty card;

request, through an application running in a client device, an information from the consumer, based on the shopping history;

verify, in a remote server, an identity of the consumer when at least a portion of the information matches the shopping history associated with the retail store, for the consumer, wherein verifying the identity of the consumer further comprises comparing different buying patterns for the consumer based on the shopping history;

provide, from the remote server, an offer to the consumer, through an application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store;

correlate multiple items in a shopping basket received from the consumer through the application running in the client device with multiple items in a shopping basket scanned by a point of sale device;

validate an offer to the consumer at a time and a place for a consumer transaction; and

provide, from the remote server, the offer to the consumer, through the application running in the client device, of a product in the retail store.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein to request the information from the consumer the one or more processors execute instructions to query the consumer about one or more items in the shopping history.

13. The system of claim 11, wherein to verify the identity of the consumer the one or more processors execute instructions to compare different buying patterns for the consumer based on the shopping history.

14. The system of claim 11, wherein to verify the identity of the consumer the one or more processors execute instructions to correlate a client device identification with multiple databases associated with multiple retail stores.

15. The system of claim 11, wherein the one or more processors further execute instructions to map the identity of the consumer to a client device identification and to store a map including the client device identification in a database.

16. The system of claim 11, wherein to verify the identity of the consumer the one or more processors execute instructions to verify that the consumer provides at least one correct answer to multiple questions based on the shopping history.

17. The system of claim 11, wherein the one or more processors further execute instructions to provide to the consumer, through the application in the client device, an advertisement for the product in the retail store before receiving a client device identification.

18. A computer-implemented method, comprising:
identifying, at a remote server, a consumer at a point of sale location, wherein the consumer checks out multiple products in a shopping basket;
informing the consumer that a rebate is due, on a product, from the shopping basket;
instructing a network terminal to provide a valid rebate voucher for the product, to the consumer;
providing a running total of earned rebates and points for display in an application installed in a client device used by the consumer;
crediting the rebate to a consumer account after the consumer has purchased the product;
correlating multiple items in a shopping basket received from the consumer through the application installed in the client device with multiple items in a shopping basket scanned by a point of sale device;

identifying a time and a place for a consumer transaction
before the consumer transaction occurs, based on a
pre-selected time-varying pattern and a correlation with
the point of sale device; and

updating, in the remote server, the consumer account with 5
an offer to the consumer based on a purchase of the
product.

19. The computer-implemented method of claim **18**,
wherein identifying, at the remote server, the consumer at
the point of sale location, further comprises receiving, from 10
the client device, an identifier for a point of sale device, the
identifier comprising a pre-selected time-varying pattern.

20. The computer-implemented method of claim **18**, fur-
ther comprising correlating the multiple products checked
out by a point of sale device at the point of sale location with 15
an identity of the consumer at the point of sale location.

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